

# **HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION**

## **Quarterly Meeting**

**One Capitol Hill, Conference Room A**

**Providence, RI**

**M I N U T E S of January 18, 2008**

**Susan Baxter, Chair, called the meeting of the RI Housing Resources Commission to order at 8:53 am in Conference Room A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI. Present were:**

### **Commissioners & Designees:**

**Baxter, Susan-Chair**

**Aaronson, Roberta**

**Bodington, Susan**

**Caffey, Joseph**

**Cola, Jeanne**

**Fields, Barbara**

**Flynn, Kevin**

**Hajian, Kaveh**

**Hammarström**

**Hannifan, Chris**

**Kravitz, Tom**

**Nadeau, Gene**

**Novais, Ana**

**Schwartz, Rhonda**

**Sekeres, Bonnie**

**Tierney, Terence**

**Van Noppen, Mark**

**Voccio, Valerie**

**Walsh, Peter**

**McAvoy, Gerald-Legal Counsel**

**Staff:**

**Shawcross, Noreen**

**De Lose Santos, Doris**

**Kue, Simon**

**Neirinckx, Ray**

**Price, Darlene**

**Tondra, Mike**

**Bergantino, Benny**

**Guests:**

**Amy Cola**

**Amy Rainone**

**Nellie Gorbea**

**Rosemary Demetri**

**Pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 42 General Laws of Rhode Island, notice of this meeting was posted at the State House and at RI Housing Resources Commission offices.**

**1. Approval of Minutes of October 19, 2007.**

**David Hammarström noted that on page 2, there was a typo and the**

correct word in paragraph one is women. Jeanne Cola made a motion to approve the minutes; Peter Walsh seconded. Motion passed.

## **2. Report of the Chair**

Susan Baxter welcomed a guest, Nellie Gorbea, the new Executive Director of Housing Works Rhode Island.

Susan gave a progress report on Building Homes RI and Neighborhood Opportunities Program disbursements. She attended several project events. NOP and BHRI will be acted upon at the next quarterly meeting.

Susan also provided an update on Housing First Rhode Island, the HRC's supportive housing program, noting that Housing Works presented very positive first year evaluation results on moving people out of shelters and into permanent housing. We hope to continue the program in FY 2009. The Interagency Council on Homelessness has a meeting scheduled for January 22, 2008 to coordinate efforts to address solutions to homelessness. Crossroads continues to be overwhelmed with people staying overnight.

Due to the foreclosure crisis, Ray Neirinckx continues to handle a heavy caseload. Susan Bodington noted that while many agencies are working on this problem, the numbers continue to rise. There are new dollars for counseling. She suggested that the HRC coordinate

and set some policy. With things moving so rapidly, it is important to coordinate efforts and we could convene the Office of Homeownership to do so.

The Healthy Kids Collaborative awarded \$660,000 to community agencies for outreach and education and it is hoped that the HRC will be included in coordination.

We recently received word that HUD homeless funding of \$6.4 million dollars was awarded to Rhode Island. Not only can we fund existing programs, but also a couple of new ones.

The Executive Committee has met to discuss the budget and to provide suggestions to the Governor for commission slots of those who have reached term limits: Dennis Langley, Angela Lovegrove, Joe Caffey, and Barbara Fields. They will serve until replaced according to state law.

Doris DeLosSantos has been selected as a member of Leadership Rhode Island. Our Legal Counsel, Gerry McAvoy, is moving to Taxation. Marcy Coleman will be the new Counsel. Gerry was thanked for his work which has greatly assisted the Commission.

### **3. FY 2009 Budget**

**Noreen reported on the line items in the program budget for FY 2009 as requested at the October 2007 meeting. Personnel costs are in the Division of Planning Budget. The Consolidated Homeless Fund is Emergency Shelter Grants, Federal Title XX and HRC Funding combined. The total program budget is \$2,170,000.**

### **4. Resolution to approve the “Report on the Status of Implementation” of the affordable housing plans**

**Noreen provided an overview of the Act and progress to date. The law is having some impact. The bond, in particular, is going to increase production in many communities. It was suggested by Barbara Fields that we develop some bullets on the bond success. We will build on what HousingWorks RI has published. Susan Bodington asked that RI Housing’s role in technical assistance be added on page 10. She noted the problems with the HRC reporting period being the year ending June 30 and the RIH reporting period of December 31. She said communities are reporting developments that may not happen.**

**There was a discussion on why the towns’ numbers are not consistent with those of Rhode Island Housing. Terry Tierney noted his concern about faulty reporting. General consensus was that this issue must be resolved. Tom Kravitz suggested a single page form**

for data collection that would have plat, lot, deed restriction and certificate of occupancy. Noreen described the disclaimer in the report that points out the problem, but said that reopening the law could cause a problem.

Jeanne Cola said that everything should be in a land trust with a deed restriction in perpetuity for anything funded by the HRC. Mark Van Noppen said that thirty year time frames meet the need to bring property up to date, and would give an opportunity to subsidize renovations. Joe Caffey moved to approve the report; Jeanne Cola seconded. Motion passed. David Hammarström and Roberta Aaronson opposed the motion. Bonnie Sekeres and Kaveh Hajian abstained. Additional comments will be accepted for another week.

## **5. Resolution for approval of the amendments to the Lead Hazard Mitigation Regulations**

The Commissioners were asked to approve the regulations for publication. Doris De Los Santos presented a PowerPoint that gave an overview of the changes. A community workshop was held to get input in advance of the formal public comment process. The emphasis in the changes is on quality control. There was also language that would better coordinate the regulations with Dept. of Health rules on lead.

There was objection to approving the regulations for publication as

the Commissioners had not received a copy to review prior to the meeting. It was suggested that we table this until the March meeting. Noreen was concerned about the delay in completing this process as we had ensured prompt action following a lawsuit. It was suggested by Kevin Flynn and Terence Tierney that in order to facilitate the process, the regulations could be published. The notice is sufficiently general to allow this. The Commissioners would then be able to comment and to object or approve at the March meeting. Mark Van Noppen moved to go forward for public comment. Susan Bodington made a friendly amendment to use the words “authorizes for publication” rather than “approve.” Terry Tierney so moved: Jeanne Cola seconded.

## **6. Reports of the Offices**

**Homelessness:** Darlene Price reported on the success of Operation First Step, the replacement program for Welcome Arnold Shelter. We have moved over 80 people into permanent housing from this program.

Darlene described calls that she has been receiving from tenants who are in foreclosed properties and have utilities shut off. She has been successful in advocating for an elderly gentleman and worked with the lender on time and funding to get him into a new home.

## **7. Announcements**

**Susan Bodington reported on the just released Supplemental (08) Budget. It appears that housing has been targeted with \$26 million being taken from Rhode Island Housing and possibly \$7.5 more if they are expected to pay for the Neighborhood Opportunities Program. Barbara Fields made a strong statement about the administration's lack of support for housing. The HRC will support RI Housing's efforts to prevent these losses at a time when the housing market is already experiencing great difficulty.**

## **8. Adjournment**

**The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 14, 2008 at 8:30 am, Conference Room A, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.**